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UNCLAS KUWAIT 000115

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NEWSPAPER PUBLISHES GOK ANTI-TERROR STRATEGY PAPER
FOR RIYADH CONFERENCE; FOCUS ON CONTROL OF CHARITIES

REF: 03 KUWAIT 4840

1. (U) Kuwait news daily Al-Qabas obtained and published a Social Affairs Ministry working paper outlining Kuwait's efforts to combat terrorism. The paper, according to the article, is expected to be presented by GOK officials at the upcoming conference in Riyadh on International Counterterrorism scheduled for February 5-8. According to the published document, the GOK intends to focus on the regulation of financial practices by charitable organizations and to initiate anti-terror conferences, awareness campaigns, and youth programs to combat extremism. The article stated that because charity organizations around the world are supporting Al-Qaida, wittingly and unwittingly, Kuwait has taken actions to control charitable funds and to prevent them from going to terrorist organizations.

2. (U) Citing UNSCR 1189, the working paper reaffirmed Kuwait's intent to discipline and control charitable organizations and to combat the funding of terrorism. It stated that Kuwait created a Supreme Commission governing all Kuwaiti charity work which would be the central point for the GOK effort to organize charities. The Commission, under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, is responsible for establishing policies for the collection of charitable donations and the spending of charitable funds inside and outside of the country.

3. (U) The working paper outlined the current Kuwaiti rules governing charitable organizations, including how they are permitted to collect, transfer, and spend charitable funds. It highlighted Kuwait's ongoing effort, by the Interior Ministry, to remove all forms of unauthorized money collection at publicly placed kiosks, donation boxes, and other unauthorized collection points, stating that all donations are restricted to donation boxes inside Mosques that have been authorized by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (reftel). The GOK also created an accountability office to verify all accounts and spending practices of charity associations according to "current internationally accepted accounting laws." The article did state that charitable funds can be distributed without conditions inside Kuwait to such projects as building mosques, schools, and hospitals and for the purposes of providing social and charitable services.

4. (U) The paper stated that changing the mentality about charitable work is the key hurdle to successful implementation of the policy. Describing charity work as firmly rooted in Kuwaiti society, it explained that some Kuwaitis continue to overlook the laws in order to freely practice what they believe to be a "right" that stems from tribalism and Kuwaiti culture. The article concluded by stating that the GOK intends to make future efforts to minimize the influence of extremism. This will be done through a variety of means, including: opening youth activity clubs to keep young Kuwaitis away from extremist influences, holding conferences on the dangers of terrorism, implementing an anti-terror awareness campaign, initiating joint Gulf-country social and cultural programs, reviewing all media to ensure no terrorist ideas are introduced, and reviewing all computer programs and technology to ensure no terrorist applications are being spread. (Comment: While the article mentioned that charity activities are the "pride of Kuwait" and that such activities show the "commitment of society to the values of Islam," it meaningfully stated the need for Kuwait to review its present situation and emphasized that discipline is required if charity work is to continue to add positively to the society. End Comment.)

5. (U) Post contacted the MFA regarding GOK attendance at the Riyadh Conference. MFA officials informed Post that the delegation has not yet been identified. Post will notify Department of the delegation composition when informed by the MFA.

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